

ORLEANS PARISH GRAND JURY
SPECIAL INVESTIGATION

JUNE 28, 1967

ORLEANS PARISH GRAND JURY
PROCEEDINGS OF

JUNE 28, 1967

PRESENT: MR. JIM GARRISON, DISTRICT ATTORNEY,
MESSRS. ALVIN OSER, JAMES ALCOCK, RICHARD BURNES,
ANDREW SCIAMBRA AND WILLIAM MARTIN, ASSISTANTS

MEMBERS OF THE ORLEANS PARISH GRAND JURY

SPECIAL INVESTIGATION

WITNESS:

EUGENE C. DAVIS (GENE DAVIS)

* * * * *

Reported by:
Maureen B. Thiel,
Secretary, Orleans
Parish Grand Jury

GENE DAVIS, after being duly sworn by the Foreman of the Orleans Parish Grand Jury, was questioned and answered as follows:

MR. ALCOCK:

State your name please

A. Eugene C. Davis.

Q. Where do you live?

A. 522 Dauphine St.

Q. How long have you been a resident of Orleans Parish?

A. I couldn't say exactly, but I have been here quite a few years.

Q. How old are you?

A. 40 years old.

Q. Where are you employed?

A. I own a bar.

Q. Where is that?

A. 704 Iberville

Q. How long have you owned that bar?

A. Since January 1.

Q. What is the name of the bar?

A. Wanda's Bar.

Q. Have you owned any other bars before that?

A. No.

Q. Have you worked in any other bars before that?

A. Yes.

Q. Where?

A. The Court of the Two Sisters,

Q. Could you approximate the time?

A. No sir, I can't.

Q. More than 5 years ago?

A. A matter of 15 years.

Q. How long were you working in the Court of Two Sisters?

A. Approximately 8 years. Maybe 9 years.

Q. What capacity did you work in the Court of Two Sisters?

A. I worked as night manager. Miss Tannenbaum was the general manager and I was her assistant.

Q. Did you do any bartending during this time?

A. I did.

Q. Did you work in any other bars?

A. I worked at the Rendezvous, which is the barroom before the Red Garter which is in the 600 block of Bourbon.

Q. How long did you work in the Rendezvous?

A. Approximately couple of years.
what

Q. In what capacity?

A. I was bartender for a while and manager for a while for Miss Julia Levy.

Q. In your business did you ever have occasion to meet Dean Andrews?

A. I did. He was a customer and came in with a woman sometimes.

Sometimes he had a stack of books, place them on the counter and work on some books - and buy a coke for the woman he drank with most of the time.

Q. That was the Rendezvous Bar?

A. Yes. That was many years ago.

Q. Did you consider Dean Andrews a friend of yours?

A. Would I?

Q. Yes.

A. Well, I don't think he would ever hurt me. I have used him on a few cases, business cases.

Q. What kind of cases?

A. One time the Rendezvous got raided, there were a couple of MP's, one of each branch, came in the door, in the early hours of the morning, somebody made a remark at one of them and they go out and they bring the police back, and they arrested everybody in the place and took them to jail.

Miss Levy called Dean Andrews and told him to come take care of the case for us. It wasn't too much of a bond, I think it was just a charge of some simple kind, that was the first dealings I ever had with Dean Andrews on any kind of a case.

Q. Who is your attorney now?

A. Wray Gill.

Q. Is he in the District Attorney's office with you now?

A. He come here to the door with me.

Q. Have you ever used Dean Andrews to parole or get any one out of jail for homosexuality charges?

A. If I did I don't know about it. I won't say for sure cause I am not positive, but I don't think I ever did.

Q. What was your legal relationship with Dean Andrews as your attorney? What kind of cases did he handle for you?

A. Well, I had - now this will take a little time, but I will explain how I used him. I have been taking care of a colored woman in the French Quarters for 15 years, maybe 16 or 17. She is 94 years old and she is on her death bed right now. This woman wanted to fix the property where it would be for me when she died and ^{he} drew up wills and fixed the property through another party, I don't know who he is, and he fixed it up where I would be taken care of. Then in the event anything ever happened to her because she is an old colored woman, she has a family but none of them seem to care enough to come take care of her so I have for 15 or 16 years bathed her and cared for her, fed her, and everything else, she can't get up out of bed. That is why I used Dean Andrews in that case. Now, one more case I used him in, I had a very close friend, he was killed in an automobile accident in Lafitte in 1965 in February right before Mardi Gras. His

mother came to me and asked me would I get her an attorney or help her to get someone to see about the parties who killed her son, she had no money, no place to live, so I said I will see Dean Andrews, so I called him and asked him if he would talk to her, and he went up there and I went with him and he drew up a lot of papers, had all the information, investigated the case and it has been court ever since, we have had no reaction out of them, there has never been anything to the case so I can't say he took care of that case for me because it never come to trial and there has never been anything to it. Any other case I can't say, I don't know. It could be now - a case in between - for I don't know.

Q. In other words to the best of your ability the only two cases that you have come into contact with Dean Andrews with are the inheritance problem and the death problem.

A. Right.

Q. To your knowledge you have never had any relationship where you called Dean Andrews to recommend him for the arrests of homosexuals.

A. I don't remember, but I don't believe I ever did. I won't say for sure.

Q. Have you ever used an alias?

A. Eugene Davis has been my name since the day I was born.

Q. Have you ever used the name of Clem Bertrand?

A. Never, never in my whole life.

Q. Have you ever used the name of Clay Bertrand?

A. Never in my life. No sir.

Q. Do you have any idea how the rumors started that/you are either Clem or Clay Bertrand?

A. I believe I told you all in the office a while ago and I will make the same statement now, NBC had the program on the air the other night and a day or two after that, maybe the next day, the statement was they said there was going to be a well known homosexual in the French Quarter named. Now could it be the guy at Regent Grove, the guy at Dixie's, could it be the guy at Lafitte In Exile - they started naming them all by name but I can't recall - and then I said well maybe they come to Gene Davis, the best one of all, and they picked me out. Now that's the only angle they could ever have to say that I was Clay Bertrand, because there is no foundation to that at all.

Q. You have never told anyone that you are Clay or Clem Bertrand?

A. No, never.

Q. You have never used that name, either of them?

A. No sir, never.

Q. Has anyone ever talked to you as a possibility of using you as being identified as either Clem Bertrand or Clay Bertrand?

A. No sir, never.

Q. Have you ever talked to Dean Andrews about about this matter?

A. He has discussed it on several occasions on the telephone, as far as me ever talking or saying anything about it I refused to discuss it, I said, I don't want to hear any part of it and I slammed the receiver on him in the men's room.

Q. Did anyone ever accuse you of being Clay Bertrand?

A. I had a birthday party in my barroom once ...

Q. Which barroom was that?

A. Wanda's Bar, 704 Iberville, and the bar was packed to the walls, and there was a radio announcer, I don't know what station he was on, his name, I can give you his name cause I asked my attorney, and it is permissible, his name is Earl Hannan, made the statement, very loaded, drinking very heavy, and he said well, there is Clay Bertrand,

Q. And he pointed at you?

A. No, but I heard him when he said it. Whoever the group was he was around, but I can't recall who they were. And I come over very angrily to him and told him don't you ever make that statement again because somebody might take it serious and I would be in a lot of trouble. That's the only time its ever been held up to me except a day or two afterwards two men from the FBI came and asked me if I would come have some coffee with them.

Q. You remember their names?

A. No, I don't remember their names. That's something I am very bad at, remembering names.

Q. Does the name Regis Kennedy ring a bell to you?

A. No. The name wouldn't mean a thing to me. One was a young man and the other one was a little bit taller. So I went to Walgreen's and had two cups of coffee with them, they had a cup of tea. And the man said to me again have you ever had another name besides Eugene Davis and I said no sir, I never had. I said Eugene C. Davis or Gene Davis is all the name I ever had and you can see in all the arrests I ever had that is the only name I ever had. I used to always use Eugene C. but I lived at 630 Bourbon Street next door, about four doors from the Rendezvous and there was an apartment house there and the people would crawl over the fence and one day somebody broke in my apartment and got my check book, they stole it, and I asked the bank to change my account to Gene Davis, that is the reason and I now sign everything Gene Davis with the exception of my liquor license I signed Eugene C. Davis. That is my real name.

Q. Did Dean Andrews ever accuse you of being Clem or Clay Bertrand?

A. No, if he has I have never heard about it.

Q. Do you know Monk Zelden?

A. If I was to see him right now in this room I couldn't tell you who he was.

Q. Did you know Lee Harvey Oswald?

A. No sir, I do not. Everybody knows him by now, they ought to, but as far as knowing him personally or anything, never. If he was to be walking ^{by} before this happened, I couldn't have told you who he was. I didn't know a thing about him.

Q. Where were you working in the summer of 1963?

A. Well, I was working at Wanda's too, and the Court of Two Sisters, I was holding down two jobs, I was the night manager and I would sleep 4 or 5 hours and go back to Wanda's.

Q. Did you ever see Lee Harvey Oswald in Wanda's?

A. Never.

Q. If I told you we had evidence of the fact that he was in Wanda's, would that....

A. I don't say he wasn't there, but I wasn't there 24 hours or on the night shift, I was there only a few hours during the daytime. But for myself, I could never say I saw him there. I believe Wanda would tell you the same thing because I heard her make the statement she never saw him.

Q. Have you ever heard him discussed there at Wanda's?

A. Never, never. Now when the investigation came about they tried to pin it down and said he used to hang around the Iberville section.

Q. These FBI agents you said you talked to, did they say how they got your name?

A. They said they got it from a reliable source, that two or three people were in discussion of well known characters in the French Quarter, homosexuals, and they tried to pin it down, probably tried to pin it down to me because I have been associated with gay bars all my life.

Q. Did they mention the NBC program?

A. No, that part wasn't brought up at all. The only thing they said to me was did you hear the broadcast? I said I sure did. If there is anything, gentlemen, that I know that could help this man in his investigation I'd be the first one to tell him. Believe me I would. Members of his staff will tell you, its on record, they have come to me many times and I have cooperated with them and helped them in many ways ..

MR. GARRISON:

That is true.

A. And if I thought for a minute there was some little flaw in this case that I could give them I would be the first one to go to Mr. Garrison, because I don't think Mr. Garrison has ever hurt me as I know of, and I don't think he ever will. As far as Dean Andrews, I don't want them using me as a black sheep, whatever it is. I'm not going to be a black sheep, but they have never said to me in any way, shape or form,

has this man said to me that I was going to be picked to be this Clay Bertrand, he didn't, and I would be the first one to tell Mr. Garrison, and say you gotta help me this man is trying to pin this deal on me.

Q. I got a call a while back, I am going to give you some of the details of it to see whether or not you recognize the person who might have had this information. It must have been a friend of yours who lived down here in the summer of '63, the call was anonymous and he said something to me about Oswald coming around the homosexuals and peddled himself to homosexuals. And he had spent a night with Oswald in a low class hotel on lower St. Charles Street. He said that a person by the name of Gene Davis would ^{know} all about it and he worked at Wanda's Bar. Do you know who that must be?

A. I have no idea, no foundation to it at all. That man never came there, if he did I did not know who he was. And I think the type people we serve in our bars would be the first ones to come and tell Mr. Garrison.

Q. Do you know Clay Shaw?

A. Do I know him? I know him very well. I lived across the street from him at 512-516, the house where the old lady I take care of, right across the street is 509 and him and

two old ladies used to get in and out of a car during the years he lived there, now as for seeing anything at night I could not say because I was gone all night working, worked all them years as night manager at the Court and I wasn't home. I couldn't say, but I did see him in the daytime when I would have occasion to go see about this old woman I take care of. I would pass and I would see him and two elderly women get in a long black car. I didnt' know his name then - I didn't know he was Clay Shaw.

Q. Can you describe that car for us?

A. It was a big, long, black car, that's all I can tell you. It might have been a Cadillac, it might have been a Chrysler, I don't know what it is. I know a Volkswagen and the little cars.

Q. Do you know who the car belonged to?

A. He drove it.

Q. Did you ever see the car parked anywhere?

A. It parked right in front of the house.

Q. Which house are you talking about?

A. 509, right across the street from 512 and 516 where the colored lady I take care of lives.

Q. When are you talking about, what time, what year?

A. I couldn't say what year now. It would be foolish to say 1929-30, cause I don't know. This was before he moved.

Q. Clay Shaw lived there when I first moved to 522 Dauphine, I would say 12 or 14 years ago, Clay Shaw was living at 509.

Q. Is that the last time you saw this car?

A. No. Well, I wouldn't attempt to say because I don't know.

Q. No chauffeur driving?

A. No, he was driving and the two elderly women got in the back.

Q. Do you know who the two elderly women were?

A. No.

Q. Do they still live at the same address?

A. No, the property has been sold twice since then.

Q. Did you ever live at 1209 Dauphine St.

A. No sir, I never lived on Dauphine St. except at 522.

Q. What is the C for in your name?

A. Just a middle initial, that's all. All I have ever gone by.

MR. BURNES:

When Dean Andrews called you about identifying you as Clay Bertrand, how long ago was this?

A. He never called me about that discussion.

Q. What kind of discussion did he call you about?

A. Dean Andrews called me to discuss the situation. I said I didn't want to hear any part of it and I hung the phone up.

Q. How long ago was that?

A. Shortly after when he was brought up before Mr. Garrison and the Grand Jury and he wanted to know, I don't know if it was the first or second time, and he wanted to know was Clay Bertrand ever in your barroom, or any of your places that you ever worked. I told him I don't even want to discuss it. Cause I don't even know who Clay Bertrand is.

Q. Have you ever heard the name Clay Bertrand in any of your places?

A. I have not. Since this trial come up we have heard it many times, the papers are full of it every day.

Q. No, I mean

A. By any of the people in it? No sir.

Q. Now you said Clay Bertraw - is the name Bertraw or Bertrand?

A. Now, I don't know. I'm not going to say which because I don't know.

Q. Did the FBI say they would come back and talk to you further?

A. Yes, they said they would talk to me later. They said after Mr. Garrison's probe is completed we would like to come back and talk to you further.

Q. Did Dean Andrews ask you to testify for him in his upcoming trial.

A. No. He has never mentioned it to me.

Q. You say you have come to know Clay Shaw better since his indictment, what do you mean by that?

A. No, I said I know him through the papers, that is the only way I know him. I have never spoke one word to Clay Shaw in my life.

Q. MR. GARRISON:

Do you know Eugene Ernest Davis?

A. No.

Q. We have a record of Eugene Ernest Davis at 1309 Dauphine, you don't know him? He lives next door to Clay Shaw.

A. No- do you have a picture of him, I might be able to identify him. There is supposed to be another lawyer in this town, you may know him, Mr. Garrison, by the name of Eugene C. Davis.

Do you know the lawyer? When I first moved to 522 Dauphine somebody asking to speak to him on the phone all night long.

Q. Mr. Davis, the black car you were speaking about, could you have seen that as late as 1963?

A. No, he did not live there in 1963. He had already moved. He had sold the property across the street - he had a swimming pool back there, I didn't know that until later.

Q. NBC ever contact you?

A. No. I never talked to anybody from NBC, I have never talked

to anybody from a radio station. The only people I ever talked to would be the two men from Mr. Garrison's office. Anytime they come to me I would cooperate with them on anything they wanted to know.

Q. Mr. Davis, where were you born?

A. In a little town, Bellwood, Pa. In Blair County.

But I was raised in the south mostly because my parents moved down here and I stayed down here all my life ever since. I have never been back since.

Q. What year were you born?

A. I am 40 years old. I will be 41 July 8th.

Q. What year?

A. Well, I am 41 years old.

Q. You don't recall the date of your birth?

A. Its on my drivers license.

Q. You say you live at 522 Dauphine St.?

MR. OSER:

What is your birth date on your drivers license?

A. July 8, 1924. I would be 43 years old.

Q. You say you never spoke to Clay Shaw? Will you tell us who you spoke to about the Clay Shaw case, or who spoke to you about it?

A. The only person as I said before would be Earl Hamman came in and he worked for a radio station and I heard him at a

time when the headlines on the papers and things like that, or something, but as far as anything else ...

Q. You said the FBI talked to you?

A. They asked me who my name was, did I have any other alias, and then they said they had heard from a reliable source that I might be the Clay Bertrand (Bertraw), and that they would like to talk to me when Mr. Garrison got through with his investigation.

Q. What were the names of the FBI agents?

A. That I could not tell you.

Q. Did they have credentials of FBI, or from Southern Research Corporation?

A. Who?

Q. Southern Research Corporation.

A. From the FBI.

Q. Did you ever talk to anyone else about this?

A. About the Clay Shaw matter?

A. Yes.

A. Never, never.

Q. Any defense lawyers or any of their investigators?

A. Never. Don't even know who their defense lawyers are.

JUROR:

Q. How well did the FBI men identify themselves to you?

A. Well one of them showed me an FBI card, he showed it to me

and it said FBI and under it had the name, now I don't recall whether it had a picture or not. I don't think they did. It was a big FBI right across the little bitty black border like the Police.

Q. Can you tell us whether or not you were arrested in New Orleans on January 8, 1967?

A. Yes sir, I was.

Q. For allowing obscenity and alcoholic beverages on the place....

A. Yes, sir I was.

Q. We do not want to go into the fact, however, at the time of your arrest, when you were booked, where did you tell the police you were from?

A. 522 Dauphine

Q. Where you were born? What place?

A. Alexandria?

Q. Why Alexandria?

A. Because I lived there one time.

Q. How about Atlanta, Ga.?

A. I have been to Atlanta, Ga. quite a few times. Back and forth, but I don't think I would give that as my birthplace. Maybe I did.

Q. If I told you the booking sheet showed Atlanta, Ga?

A. It could be, I am not going to say no.

Q. Why did you tell them Atlanta, Ga.

A. Because I was nervous like I am now. And its something, when you go before the police, you get nervous.

Q. I see, I guess like when you told the police your birthdate was July 8, 1926.

A. Well, I didn't have my wallet with me at the time and I told them I was 41 years old. I am not going to say for sure because I don't remember that. At the time when they took me in it was 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning, a whole gang of us to the Central Lockup and I might have said anything. We were all nervous and shookup.

Q. You say you run a bar, Wanda's, at 704 Iberville in the French Quarter, and no one has talked about this case to you?

A. No, I would be the first to go to Mr. Garrison if they had, like I told you.

Q. There is a large homosexual element there and none of them have been in talking about it?

A. No.

Q. by juror:

Have you heard the name Clay Bertrand used? Or Clem Bertrand?

A. That comes out in the paper if they are sitting there they discuss it that way, people I don't even know who they are. But before that I never did, never in my life. I didn't know there was such a person living before that and I still don't believe there is such a person.

JUROR:

Q. Did you ever attend any of these weddings, one of these gay weddings?

A. Never, never.

Q. Have you ever been married?

A. Yes.

Q. Children?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Where is your wife?

A. I don't know - run off with somebody else. I have nothing to hide, you can check and find everything I am telling you is the truth.

MR. GARRISON:

Do you have a son?

A. Yes.

Q. What is his name?

A. I have one named Gerald Wayne and one Harry Eugene and I have a daughter named Shirley.

Q. Does 800 Monroe Drive mean anything to you? In Atlanta?

A. There used to be a Eugene Davis at 800 Monroe Drive in Atlanta.

Q. Are you familiar with the address 137 S. Liberty St.?

A. No sir.

Q. I have been in Atlanta, I was some friends by name of Martin, I went up there to a funeral. Where the address was I

couldn't tell you.

Q. South Liberty Street is in New Orleans - its not well known.

Do you know of any hotels on S. Liberty St. at all?

A. No. I don't even know where South Liberty is.

JUROR:

How tall are you?

A. About 5'9" or 10'.

Q. Do you have in your possession a birth certificate?

A. No, I don't. I had papers of all kinds but they were stolen from me one time.

Q. Have you ever served in the Armed Services?

A. I was turned down because I had a mastoid, 4F. I am registered in Evangeline Parish, no that's a mistake, I am registered in Ville Platte.

Q. Do you have a copy of your registration?

A. No, I don't. But Ville Platte, La. if you want to check on it.

JUROR:

Do you have a drivers license for this State?

A. Yes.

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Q. How ~~ask~~ do they say you are on your drivers license?

A. 5'9". I am so nervous. Of course when you go to get your drivers license they ask you how old you are and how tall you are. They write it down. They don't take your height and all that.

Q. Are you the licensee of this bar?

A. Yes, I am

Q. Your name is on the license?

A. Yes, Eugene C. Davis.

Q. Do you own the bar?

A. (Inaudible)

Q. Do you have homosexuals in the bar?

A. (Inaudible)

Q. You said you've been thick with the gay boys?

A. That's right. Homosexuals hang out in every bar. They come from the Monteleone, they come from Moran's, they come from Felix's, they come from everywhere. But I would say there are some people who are not homosexuals also.

Q. I understand, but they frequent your bar?

A. Yes. They frequent nearly every bar in the City.

Q. You said Dean Andrews came to your bar?

A. At the Rendezvous Bar. That was years ago. He would come

Q. with his law books and lay down on the end, and he would come with some girl - she could have been maybe a lesbian or a dike or somebody like that - at that time there were well known homosexual bars in the French Quarter.

Q. This bar you have now at 704 - has Dean Andrews ever been in this bar?

A. I think maybe a time or two, yes, in the year that I have

been there.

Q. Did you discuss anything about this case with him?

A. No, I wasn't even there when he came in, he had a coca cola or something and they left.

Q. You never met Dean Andrews at your bar at all? This bar?

A. At 704, yes I have seen him in there a couple of times.

Q. You talked with him?

A. A couple of times in the last - nothing about that, this is pertaining to business I told you earlier of. He might have brought me an affidavit or something to sign. Something like that.

Q. Dean Andrews, you said, never handled any sex cases for you?

A. Never.

Q. Have you ever called Dean Andrews and gotten homosexual cases paroled?

A. Never.

Q. No time?

A. Never, to Dean Andrews

Q. I mean to anybody?

A. Oh, certainly, I called Mr. Ross _____, I called Malcolm O'Hara when he was an attorney. I called several people to see if they would help them get out of jail. Naturally. When you run a place of business and don't try to help somebody

you wouldn't be much of a business man, would you?

Q. When you had the Rendezvous Bar

A. I didn't have it, I worked there.

Q. When did you work there?

A. Many years ago. I don't remember the exact year.

Q. Did you work there in 1961, 2 or 3?

A. No. It was not the Rendezvous then, I think it was in 1956, 7 or 8, somewhere in there. Mrs. Levy sold out to the Red Garter people.

JUROR:

What is the difference between a lesbian and a dike?

A. Well, a dike - I don't have them in my place, I said the Rendezvous.

Q. What is the difference?

A. Well, the Rendezvous at that time - a dike is supposed to be a person taking the place of a man, a lesbian is a woman who goes with a dike, in other words, they can handle themselves.

FOREMAN:

Any more questions?

A. Mr. Garrison, be assured that I know anything I will be the first to come to you. And I would appreciate it - this can hurt my business. The papers, my picture and all - that is why I don't want it. And whoever is using me as a black

sheep, or whatever the thing is here, I sure would appreciate it, Mr. Garrison, if you would get to the bottom of this and anything that I know I will come to you first with it.

MR. GARRISON:

- Q. You might come in my office downstairs and give us a statement if you will.
- A. If it would be possible could I come back and make it a little later because I have this old woman, she is 94 years old, and has nobody taking care of her, and I have been away from her now for - and I will come right back as soon as I attend to her.

Thank you gentlemen.

C E R T I F I C A T E

I certify that the preceding transcript is a true and correct copy of the testimony given, under oath, in the preceding matter, before the Orleans Parish Grand Jury, on June 28, 1967, and reduced to typewriting by me.

Maureen B. Thiel